

Message Text

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DEFENSE

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TAGS: MARR IC NATO

SUBJECT: IDF RETENTION NEGOTIATIONS: DEFENSE AFFAIRS SPEECH

BY FONMIN

REF: REYKJAVIK 1465

1. SUMMARY: IN SPEECH TO PROGRESSIVE PARTY MEETING DEC 6, FONMIN AGUSTSSON STATED USUAL AMBIVALENT VIEWS ON DEFENSE MATTERS AND BASE RETENTION NEGOTIATIONS BUT MADE NEW POINT, WHICH MIGHT PROVE OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE, THAT THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT FOR IDF TO LEAVE ICELAND BEFORE MID-1975. END SUMMARY.

2. IN SPEECH ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE TO PROGRESSIVE PARTY STUDY GROUP DECEMBER 6, FONMIN AGUSTSSON TOOK SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT LINE FROM HIS PREVIOUS STATEMENTS BY SAYING THAT WHILE IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE FOR IDF TO LEAVE ICELAND PRIOR TO MID-1975, HE DID NOT CONSIDER THIS AN ABSOLUTE DEADLINE. HE COUPLED THIS CONCESSION, HOWEVER, WITH IDEA THAT SPECIFIC TIME LIMIT MUST BE SET NOW AS TO WHEN FORCE WOULD LEAVE. IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REFERRING TO CONTROVERSIAL EDITORIAL BY TOMAS KARLSSON IN

DECEMBER 1 ISSUE OF PROGRESSIVE NEWSPAPER TIMINN (REFTEL, AGUSTSSON SAID HE HAD APPROVED IT BECAUSE HE FELT MAIN POINT WAS THAT IT WAS UP TO USG WHETHER PRESENT AGREEMENT HAD TO BE TERMINATED, WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE RESORTED TO IF THE USG DID NOT COOPERATE IN RECOGNIZING THAT ICELAND DID NOT WANT FOREIGN TROOPS ON ITS SOIL.

3. SPEAKING SPECIFICALLY OF CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS, FONMIN SAID US NEGOTIATORS HAD PROPOSED DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR BASE AT OCTOBER MEETING AND THOSE IDEAS HAD BEEN FURTHER EXPANDED AT NOVEMBER MEETING. WHILE DISCUSSIONS WERE CONFIDENTIAL, HE COULD SAY HIS OWN VIEW WAS THAT HE STILL WISHED MILITARY COULD LEAVE AT ONCE AND ICELAND COULD REVERT TO POSITION PRIOR TO 1951 WHEN ICELAND WAS MEMBER OF NATO WITHOUT FOREIGN TROOPS BEING STATIONED IN COUNTRY. IN THAT CONNECTION, HE FOUND INTERESTING IDEAS OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WHO ADVOCATE CONVERTING BASE TO "UNARMED SURVEILLANCE STATION."

4. AS TO OUTCOME OF TALKS, FONMIN SAID THAT IF NO AGREEMENT WITH USG WERE REACHED, PROPOSAL FOR TERMINATION OF PRESENT AGREEMENT WOULD BE PUT BEFORE ALTHING. HE THEN MADE SOME VAGUE COMMENT ABOUT HOPING THE OPPOSITION PARTIES WOULD NOT HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO REJOICE OVER FALL OF GOVERNMENT BECAUSE NO SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND ON DEFENSE AFFAIRS.

5. IN QUESTION PERIOD FOLLOWING TALK, AGUSTSSON WAS ASKED, IF IT WERE NOT A REQUIREMENT THAT MILITARY LEAVE PRIOR TO MID-1975, AND IF NOT WHEN IN HIS JUDGMENT IT COULD LEAVE. HE REPLIED HE BELIEVED PRESENT GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONCLUDE DEFINITIVE AGREEMENT ON THIS POINT AND THAT THE EXACT PERIOD SHOULD BE SPECIFIED IN THE AGREEMENT. HE SAID "WE DO NOT WISH IT TO BE A GREAT NUMBER OF YEARS."

6. WHEN ASKED WHETHER AND HOW ICELAND PROFITS FROM MILITARY PRESENCE, HE SAID THERE ARE PROFITS FROM AIRPORT, THERE ARE BUSINESS DEALINGS WITH THE MILITARY, AND ICELAND BENEFITS FROM SOME OF THE MILITARY PROJECTS. HE SAID FROM ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW, HOWEVER, ICELAND HAD NEVER BEEN BETTER ABLE TO AFFORD TO HAVE MILITARY LEAVE. BECAUSE OF LABOR SHORTAGE "VARIOUS INDUSTRIES ARE WAITING TO GET PEOPLE AND THERE WILL BE NO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROBLEM TO FIND JOBS FOR THOSE NOW EMPLOYED BY THE MILITARY."
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